

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

103-2

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------|
| STATE: VIRGINIA | |
| COUNTY: BUENA VISTA (in city) | |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY | |
| ENTRY NUMBER | DATE |
| | 4/13/72 |

| | |
|--|--|
| 1. NAME | |
| COMMON: SOUTHERN SEMINARY MAIN BUILDING | |
| AND/OR HISTORIC: BUENA VISTA HOTEL | |

| | | | |
|---|------------|----------------------|-------------|
| 2. LOCATION | | | |
| STREET AND NUMBER: Intersection of Ivy Avenue and Park Avenue | | | |
| CITY OR TOWN: Buena Vista (James Kenneth Robinson, Seventh District Congressman) | | | |
| STATE Virginia | CODE 51 | COUNTY: (in city) | CODE 530 |

| | | | |
|---|--|--|--|
| 3. CLASSIFICATION | | | |
| CATEGORY (Check One) | OWNERSHIP | STATUS | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC |
| <input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object | <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress | Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate) | | | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum | <input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ _____ |

| | | | |
|--|--------------------|------------|--|
| 4. OWNER OF PROPERTY Roy K. Patteson, Jr., President | | | |
| OWNER'S NAME: Board of Trustees | | | |
| STREET AND NUMBER: Southern Seminary Junior College | | | |
| CITY OR TOWN: Buena Vista | STATE: Virginia | CODE 51 | |

| | | | |
|--|--------------------|------------|--|
| 5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION | | | |
| COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Buena Vista Court House | | | |
| STREET AND NUMBER: : | | | |
| CITY OR TOWN: Buena Vista | STATE: Virginia | CODE 51 | |

| | | | |
|--|--------------------|------------|--|
| 6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS | | | |
| TITLE OF SURVEY: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey | | | |
| DATE OF SURVEY: 1971 <input type="checkbox"/> Federal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> County <input type="checkbox"/> Local | | | |
| DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission | | | |
| STREET AND NUMBER: Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building | | | |
| CITY OR TOWN: Richmond | STATE: Virginia | CODE 51 | |

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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

☒ Excellent☐ Good☐ Fair

(Check One)

☐ Deteriorated☐ Ruins☐ Unexposed

(Check One)

☐ Altered☒ Unaltered

(Check One)

☐ Moved☒ Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Southern Seminary's main building, originally built as a hotel, is a vast and rambling crescent-shaped structure set near the edge of a promontory overlooking downtown Buena Vista with splendid views of the surrounding mountains. The building's emphasis on color and textural variation place it in the stylistic category that is usually termed Queen Anne. However, the use of round towers with conical and domical roofs illustrate a French Renaissance influence.

The building's main body is three and a half stories on a high basement. The main or first story is brick while the upper stories are frame. The whole is covered by a steep gable roof of slate pierced at various intervals by one and two-part dormers. The upper stories are faced with both clapboarding and a variety of different type wood shingles. In some sections the shingles have straight edges and in others they have either wavy or rounded edges. The structural frame of the building is suggested on the upper stories by an overlay of boards that are painted white to contrast with the dark maroon of the clapboards and shingles.

The building's impressive central feature consists of a three and a half story cross gable flanked by two round towers also of brick. The east tower is four stories in height and is topped by a conical roof while the west tower rises to a height of five stories and is topped by an elongated dome with finial. Wrapped about the three lower stories of the towers are three-level wooden galleries that are joined at the third story directly over the front door by a pedimented arch with lattice-work spandrels. The first level of the galleries extends across the building's entire front. The front door and many of the windows in the central feature are topped by rough-hewn semi-circular stone arches that give this center section a Romanesque flavor.

Flanking the central feature are two additional cross gables with chamfered corners and Palladian windows in each of their gables. At the extreme ends of the building are two additional round towers; the west tower has a conical roof and the east is covered with a dome. The east end of the building extends into a large rounded projection which forms space for the ballroom on the first floor. This projection is capped by a conical roof with a flat roofed lantern. On the rear of the building's east end is a three and a half story wing whose first story has been hidden by a modern brick addition.

The main spaces and interior trim of Southern Seminary's first floor have remained relatively unchanged. The public rooms and corridors are lined with paneled wainscoting and have high ceilings and doors. Opposite the front door of the spacious entrance hall is a large but somewhat plain brick fireplace. There are two principle staircases, one in a corridor to the west of the fireplace, and the other approximately halfway down the east corridor. Both are fitted up with paneled wainscoting, molded handrail, turned balusters, and heavy ornamented newel. Those first floor rooms that are not used as reception rooms serve as offices for administration and faculty. The original guest rooms on the upper floors now serve as dormitories for the students.

The building and its handsome informally planted grounds are maintained in excellent condition.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

8. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian ☐ 16th Century ☐ 18th Century ☒ 20th Century
☐ 15th Century ☐ 17th Century ☒ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi- | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry | losophy | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human- | |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | itarian | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The period 1889-1891 saw a great land boom in the eastern part of Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, a boom which spurred much of the economic development of the area. This boom was in large part brought about by the construction through the region of the Norfolk and Western Railroad, the vehicle that was to make accessible the area's almost untouched natural resources. The healthful climate, beautiful scenery, expanses of timber, ample streams, and reported rich deposits of mineral ore, thus were made available to those who could organize to take advantage of them. The boom, fanned by northern investors, local entrepreneurs, and extraordinary promotion reached tremendous proportions before it finally burst as a result of the Panic of 1893. Land development companies were formed, and up and down the railroad new towns were laid out, and industrial sites were set aside.

The Buena Vista Company, headed by A. T. Barclay was one of the first such companies to go into business, and as early as February, 1889, it was able to announce that all of its \$600,000 capital stock had been subscribed. Typical of these development companies, one of the first buildings it erected was what a local newspaper described as a "Queen Anne Hotel" on a plateau overlooking the town. Such vast and often lavish hotels were built to serve the useful function of advertizing the company and providing impressive and comfortable accommodations to visitors who might be potential investors.

The Buena Vista Company received a setback in July, 1890, when a fire destroyed its hotel. Before the flames had died, however, President Barclay telegraphed his contractor, J. P. Pettyjohn in Lynchburg, "to make arrangements at once and contract for rebuilding the house . . ." The company accepted an ambitious design by the architect S. W. Foulks of Pennsylvania, assembled several hundred thousand bricks at the site, and planned to put "one hundred and fifty hands" to work immediately. Officials predicted that the new building would be "one of the most rapidly built, as well as one of the most substantial and beautiful structures of modern times."

The resulting new edifice was indeed among the most impressive of all the Valley boom hotels, and its completion had the desired psychological effect on Buena Vista. Within the next two years, some 600 structures including dwellings, churches, stores, and other buildings had been completed. Just before the hotel opened, however, it was sold by the Buena Vista Company to a group of private investors. Following the Panic of 1893 which forced its closing, the hotel was bought by Dr. Edgar H. Rowe. Dr. Rowe was a Methodist Minister who operated the Bowling Green Female Academy, founded in Caroline County in 1867 by his sister-in-law, Alice Scott Chandler. In 1901 Dr. Rowe opened a branch of the school in the Buena Vista hotel building. With the opening of this school Dr. Rowe formed the Southern Seminary System of Schools which consisted of the Bowling Green School, the Buena

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(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

8.

Vista school and a third school in Alderson, West Virginia. By 1907 the Bowling Green school had closed and the Buena Vista school became Southern Seminary's main institution. Through the later guidance of the Durham and Robey families, Southern Seminary developed into one of Virginia's leading preparatory schools and junior colleges. The institution's appreciation and careful maintenance of the hotel as its principal building secured the preservation of this significant structure. Today Southern Seminary's main building stands as one of the last, if not the best, examples of western Virginia's "boom hotel" architecture.

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Heiner, Anne Brandon, Editor. Volume Seven of the Proceedings of the Rockbridge Historical Society 1966-1969. Verona, Virginia: McClure Printing Co., Inc., 1970.

Lyle, Royster, Jr. "Buena Vista and Its Boom --1889-1891." Rockbridge Historical Society, October 25, 1971.

Lyle, Royster, Jr. "Rockbridge County's Boom Hotels." Virginia Cavalcade (Winter 1971), vol. XX, no. 3, pp. 5-13.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY | | | O R | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES | | |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|--------|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| CORNER | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | | LATITUDE | LONGITUDE | |
| | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds | Degrees Minutes Seconds |
| NW | ° ' " | ° ' " | | 37 ° 44 ' 25 " | 79 ° 21 ' 01 " | |
| NE | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |
| SE | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |
| SW | ° ' " | ° ' " | | | | |

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: less than 10 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| | | | |
|--------|------|---------|------|
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY | CODE |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:
VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION STAFF

ORGANIZATION: VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

DATE: December, 1971

STREET AND NUMBER:
Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond

STATE: Virginia

CODE: 51

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

Name _____
James W. Moody, Jr., Director
Title Va. Historic Landmarks Commission

Date

12/21/71

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date _____

ATTEST:

Keeper of The National Register

Date

4/13/72

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

Buena Vista, Va. 1965

(Scale: 1:24,000)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

SOUTHERN SEMINARY MAIN BUILDING

latitude
37°44'25"

longitude
79°21'01"

5139 N
(LEXINGTON)
1:62,500

79°22'30"
37°45'

644000m E.

8 MI. TO U.S. 11

4179000m N.

